

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8444

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 5651

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: KS, MASS, MILI

SUBJECT: ROK PRESS ON REDEYE MISSILE DELIVERY

1. FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT OF WASHINGTON DATELINED ARTICLE BY SO WHAN-HYON CARRIED ON ORIENT PRESS WIRE SERVICE JULY 21. ARTICLE WAS DISTRIBUTED TO AND CARRIED BY ROK PRESS JULY 22 WITH UNDERLINED WORDS OMITTED. BEGIN QUOTE: THE ACCURATE, MAN-PORTABLE, SURFACE-TO-AIR REDEYE GUIDED MISSILES ARE DELIVERED TO THE KOREAN ARMED FORCES ALREADY IN JUNE ACCORDING TO THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN KOREAN DEFENSE MINISTER SHUH JONG-CHYUL AND HIS U.S. CONUNTERPART DONALD RUMSFELD AT THE NINTH KOREA-U.S. SECURITY CONSULTATIVE ANNUAL MEETING IN HAWAII LATE MAY, IT WAS LEARNED WEDNESDAY.

SENIOR U.S. ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS, EXPLAINING THAT THE REDEYE MISSILES ARE HEAT-SEEKING, SHOULDER-FIRED AIR DEFENSE GUIDED MISSILES TO PROTECT FRONT-LINE ARMY UNITS FROM LOW FLYING ATTACK AIRCRAFT AND TO DENY THE ENEMY THE CAPABILITY OF OPERATING OBSERVATION AIRCRAFT OF THE FIELD ARMY, (UNDERLINED CONFIRMED TODAY THAT THE U.S. HAS DELIVERED TO KOREA THE REDEYES LAST MONTH.)

THE OFFICIALS ALSO SAID THAT THEY UNDERSTAND THE REDEYES WERE ALREADY DEPLOYED (UNDERLINED ON THE FIVE SMALL

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ISLANDS OFF THE KOREAN WEST COAST) TO ENHANCE THE SOUTH KOREAN

(AIR) DEFENSE CAPABILITY (THERE,) AND ADDED THAT THE U.S. FORCES IN KOREA HAS THE REDEYES IN ITS WAR RESERVES, (AND IF THE DEFENSE CONDITION (DEFCON) ORDER IS LOWERED--IN OTHER WORDS, THE ENEMY ATTEMPT TO ATTACK APPEARS IMINENT, THOSE REDEYE MISSILES ARE PLANNED IMMEDIATELY TO BE DELIVERED TO THE KOREAN ARMED FORCES IN THE FRONT LINE.)

WHILE REFUSING TO REVEAL THE NUMBER AND OTHER DETAILED MISSIONS OF THE GUIDED MISSILES DELIVERED TO KOREA, THE OFFICIALS STRESSED THAT KOREA IS ONE OF THE FEW AMERICAN ALLIES WHICH HAVE RECEIVED THE REDEYES SO FAR.

IT WAS LEARNED THAT THE REDEYES WERE VERY ACCURATE AND EFFECTIVE AGAINST THE ENEMY AIRCRAFT DURING THE MIDDLE EAST WAR OF 1973.

THE TWO-MAN CREW-LAUNCHING REDEYE MISSILES WHICH CAN BE CARRIED THROUGH UNDERBRUSH AND OVER RUGGED TERRAIN WHERE NO OTHER AIR DEFENSE WEAPONS CAN GO IS KNOWN TO HAVE AN EFFECTIVE RANGE OF ABOUT (THREE) MILES WITHIN WHICH THE MISSILE IS SEEKING THE HEAT OF THE ENEMY PLANES, ATTACKING OR RETREATING AFTER ATTACKS. END QUOTE.

2. EMBASSY WILL RESPOND TO ANTICIPATED PRESS QUERIES WITH "NO COMMENT" UNLESS OTHERWISE DIRECTED. WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFO RE STORY SOURCE.
SNEIDER

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